

For Immediate Release

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FROM THE ANCIENT TO THE MODERN

Indian and Southeast Asian Art Including Modern and Contemporary Indian Art March 31, 2005

New York – On March 31, Christie's New York's Asia Week will conclude with the sale of *Indian and Southeast Asian Art Including Modern and Contemporary Indian Art*. The sale is mainly composed of private consignments, notably from the collection of Dr. William and Mrs. William T. Price, a Texas neurosurgeon, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the collection of Prince and Princess Aschwin zur Lippe-Biesterfeld. Coincidentally, Lippe served as the former Asian Art curator at The Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1950-73.

The sale begins with a very comprehensive selection of Gandharan Buddhist sculpture. It includes a powerful schist head of the Emaciated Siddhartha (estimate \$60,000-80,000). As one of the quintessential Gandharan iconic types, it expresses the spiritual state of the Prince Siddhartha seeking the meaning of life while at the threshold between life and death before reaching Enlightenment through the 'Middle Way.' Other highlights from this section include a large and very finely carved gray schist relief of the Teaching Buddha (estimate: \$150,000-200,000). The Teaching Buddha is seated on a lotus throne carved with highly articulated petals and flanked by two large figures of Bodhisattvas. The scene belongs to a group of reliefs generally attributed to the miracle of Sravasti where Buddha performed eight miraculous feats. Two beautiful gray schist figures of Buddha are also offered, one showing Buddha with his head slightly turned to the side (estimate: \$120,000-180,000) while the other figure has his hand raised in *abhaya mudra* (estimate: \$120,000-180,000). A large carved gray schist relief of Buddhapada (estimate: \$90,000-120,000) depicts the impression of Buddha's feet, symbolic of his presence.

The sale offers a superb group of sculptures from the Collection of Dr. and Mrs. William T. Price, revealing a connoisseur with a deep passion and a discerning eye. The strength of the

collection lies in the juxtaposition of superb examples of medieval Indian and Southeast Asian sculpture of the same era. The cover lot is an 11th century sandstone torso of the goddess Uma, Khmer, Angkor period, Baphuon style (estimate: \$250,000-350,000). The sculpture entirely focuses on pure form in its elegant line and treatment of the sampot with finely incised parallel pleats and fishtail sash, and finished with a smoothly polished upper torso. Similarly executed and originally acquired from the renowned New York dealer, William H. Wolff, a large life-sized figure shows Uma with a finely detailed conical headdress (estimate: \$200,000-300,000). The Price group of major Khmer sculpture is completed by a large life-sized buff sandstone figure of Shiva, Angkor period, style of Angkor Thom, Bayon, late 12th/early 13th century (estimate: \$200,000-300,000) gracefully carved in the round with an animated expression.

Another Southeast Asian highlight from the Price collection is a large figure of Buddha carved from volcanic stone, Borobudur, 9th century, emanating a serene calmness and noble spirit. It is one of few in private hands. Complementing the Price Southeast Asian collection is a large bronze figure of Buddha, Thailand, Mon-Dvaravati, 9th century (estimate: \$400,000-600,000), from a private West Coast collection. The standing figure of the Buddha with both hands raised in *vitarka mudra* is a form unique to mainland Southeast Asia and it epitomizes the elegance of Mon-Dvaravati style. Large scale sculptures of this type are exceedingly rare and this is one of the very few to still exist in private hands.

The medieval Indian sculpture from the Price collection includes a marble figure of a goddess, Rajasthan or Gujarat, first half 12th century (estimate: \$180,000-250,000), voluptuously modeled in a sinuous pose that exudes youthful grace and vitality. The selection is complemented by choice bronzes from India, Nepal, and Tibet, collected early on and in exquisite taste by Prince and Princess zur Lippe-Biesterfeld and displayed for many years in their Paris apartment.

The Himalayan section further includes a fine selection of bronzes, thangkas, manuscript covers and ritual objects. Representing the melding of Tibetan Buddhist tradition and Chinese aesthetics is the exquisite gilt bronze figure of Manjushri (estimate: \$200,000-300,000), bearing the Imperial mark of the Ming Yongle period (1403-24). It is among the largest of its type and unsurpassed in the refined quality of its casting and intricate detailing. The gilding is almost entirely intact and it still bears its original consecration inside the sealed base.

The afternoon session is entirely dedicated to Indian painting, beginning with a choice selection of Mughal and Pahari miniatures leading into modern and contemporary art. The selection is well-balanced between works of the Bengal School from the early part of the 20th Century, the Progressive Group and younger contemporary artists with a focus on high quality works. The auction includes three major works by Syed Haider Raza: *Sports*, (estimate: \$120,000-150,000) an important early figurative work depicting a hunting scene that was featured in a 1956 Parisian exhibition organized by art critic Isis Kischka; *Bindu*, 1998, a large and striking oil painting of a black sphere (estimate: \$120,000-150,000) representing the life forces through the notion of the seed; and *Kundalini*, (estimate: \$100,000-120,000) also expanding on tantric symbolism in multicolored concentric circles.

Renowned artist Maqbool Fida Husain is well represented with paintings comprehensively spanning his career. Highlights include: *Three Graces*, a theme harkening to Greek mythology (estimate: \$90,000-120,000) and *Untitled* (estimate: \$60,000-80,000), a work depicting nudes relating to his famous *Kama Sutra* series of the late 1960's-70's.

In the large diptych, *Mirror Image* (estimate: \$80,000-100,000), Akbar Padamsee conceives of an archetypal mythic landscape through the identifiable elements of the earth, sun, moon and planets.

Francis Newton Souza is represented by seven paintings. In *Psychiatrist and his wife* (estimate: \$30,000-40,000) he explores the human psyche. He depicts the psychiatrist in a cubistic manner, painting him 'inside out' to reveal a complex and fragmented persona while his wife is rendered in a calm and composed fashion, her beauty elegantly finished.

Concluding the selection, is a fine group by Ram Kumar highlighted by a transitional cubistic figural work (estimate: \$50,000-70,000) on the threshold to abstraction; and the works of younger artists such as Bikash Bhattacharjee, Atul Dodiya, and Chittrovanu Mazumdar.

Auction: Indian and Southeast Asian Art

Including Modern and Contemporary Indian Art March 31 at 10 am and 2 pm

Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center

March 23 - 30

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

More information about Christie's sale of *Indian and Southeast Asian Art including Modern and Contemporary Indian Art* can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.